

Minutes from a Meeting of the Concordia Council on Student Life
Held on January 30, 2009
Loyola Campus AD-308, 10am

PRESENT: Ms. Elizabeth Morey (Chair), Ms. Lauren Broad (Secretary), Ms. Anna Barrafato, Mr. Gerald Beasley, Dr. Donald Boisvert, Dr. Catherine Bolton, Mr. Elie Chivi, Mr. Roger Côté, Ms. Catherine Dicaire, Ms. Melanie Drew, Ms. Angela Ghadban, Ms. Priscila Gomes, Ms. Marlene Gross, Ms. Keyana Kashfi, Ms. Lina Lipscombe, Ms. Lisa Mahabir (on behalf of Ms. Johanne De Cubellis), Mr. Kurt Reckziegel, Mr. Rodney Roberts (on behalf of Ms. Katherine Hedrich), Mr. Mansimarjot Singh Samra (on behalf of Mr. Ahmed Ali Abumazwed), Mr. Jean-Philippe Savard, Ms. Katie Sheahan, Ms. Laura Stanbra, Ms. Brigitte St-Laurent, Ms. Lorraine Toscano, Ms. Rose Wangechi, Mr. Devin Wells.

ABSENT WITH REGRETS: Ms. Daniela Caputo.

ABSENT: Ms. Claudie Boujaklian, Mr. Jean Brisebois, Ms. Cathy Lin.

GUEST: Mr. Jonathan Elston, Mr. Jose Garcia, Ms. Jane Hackett, Ms. Louyse Lussier.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair called the meeting to order. Dr. Boisvert moved to approve the agenda. Ms. Drew seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair notified the Council that Mr. Mansimarjot Singh Samra would represent the Graduate Student Association in Mr. Abumazwed's absence until mid-February. She also welcomed Mr. Roberts and Ms. Mahabir who were replacing Ms. Hedrich and Ms. De Cubellis, respectively. The Chair wished to welcome back Mr. Beasley and to acknowledge the success of Live-In For Literacy 2009 that took place in the lobby of the Webster library from January 16th to 25th. She also welcomed guests Jonathan Elston, Coordinator of the Housing and Job Bank (HOJO), and Jose Garcia, CSU VP Services, who were invited to give a brief summary of their semi-annual report. The Chair reminded the Council of the Open Forum on the Student Experience, hosted by Dr. Boisvert, taking place on February 13th. It was noted that an additional formal CCSL meeting would be set for February, and that all Council members should send their availabilities to Ms. Broad as soon as possible.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MEETING OF JANUARY 9TH, 2009

Mr. Chivi moved to approve the minutes and Ms. Drew seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

In response to expressed concerns by students at the January 9th CCSL meeting, Ms. Stanbra distributed a report from the Financial Aid and Awards Office (FAAO) on the 2008-2009 International Student Tuition Bursary. Ms. Stanbra reported that three students had requested more detail from the FAAO as to why they did not receive the bursary. Ms. Stanbra agreed that applicants who do not receive funding should receive more explanation as to why, and that more follow up would be a necessary improvement. Ms. Stanbra continued by reviewing the statistics found in the report and noted that some files would be reassessed, such as those with missing documentation. She also expressed her desire to meet with the stakeholders of the bursary to hear feedback and any suggestions on how to improve the process following its first year of implementation. Ms. Stanbra added that she would approach the Undergraduate Awards Committee with suggested changes in policy. She referred members of CCSL to page 2 of the report for details of the awareness campaign and the selection process. Ms. Stanbra welcomed ideas on how to create more awareness of the bursary among international students. Mr. Chivi asked if the minimum grade point average (GPA) was a requirement of the University, and he asked what would happen if a student was unable to maintain the minimum GPA because they had to work to pay their tuition fees. Ms. Stanbra responded that the 2.0 GPA is the minimum to remain in good academic standing at the University. She added that each case might be looked at individually to examine all circumstances affecting the student. Mr. Chivi inquired if funds were taken from the bursary in order to pay for advertising, and Ms. Stanbra said no. Ms. Dicaire questioned whether a

student's opportunity for funding was hindered if their GPA was only slightly over the 2.0 minimum. Ms. Stanbra replied that their chances would not be hindered, but that the student's overall situation would be taken into consideration.

5. REPORTS AND ITEMS OF INFORMATION

5.1 Sub-committees

Special Projects

Ms. Stanbra reported that the Committee was now receiving applications for the winter 2009 deadline; February 16th, 2009. The Committee had already established their meeting times for the first week in March to review new applications. Approximately \$90,000 is still available for distribution and she wished to encourage students to apply. Few applications had yet been received, however most are expected to be submitted closer to the deadline. She also noted that the applications were now available for submission online. Ms. Broad added that handwritten submissions would not be accepted and those who did not follow this guideline would be contacted individually by the Dean of Students Office.

Committee on Communications & Awareness Raising of the Student Services Sector

Ms. Sheahan announced that the Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning will be implementing a standard course outline format. This new format will include information on all of the Student Services, in bullet form, so as to advise students of the various services available to them. Although this initiative has not been officially confirmed as yet, she was given authorization to share the plan for this initiative with the Council.

CCSL Awards

Ms. Morey notified the Council that a call for nominations for the CCSL Outstanding Contribution Awards had begun. Advertising would begin the week of February 2nd, and would continue until the deadline for submissions of March 9th, 2009. The Chair reminded Mr. Savard that the CCSL Awards Committee still did not have a representative from the GSA.

Housing and Job Bank – Interim report

Ms. St-Laurent reported to the Council that she and Ms. Ghadban had met on two occasions with Mr. Elston, coordinator of the Housing and Job Bank (HOJO), to discuss its funding, revenues, expenses and activities. Mr. Garcia, VP of the CSU and Mr. Elston gave a brief interim report on the activities of HOJO to date. The Council was given the HOJO Semi-Annual Report 2008 for review prior to the CCSL meeting, and Mr. Elston referred to it to highlight their findings. To summarize, the report revealed an overall increase in all indicators, with the exception of the supply of housing, which is beyond the control of HOJO. Mr. Elston confirmed that HOJO has established new partnerships, with the Dean of Students Office and Tandem Montreal. HOJO has created four new online resources, five new handouts for students and two new workshops. One of the workshops, Safe In The City, provides students with tools for being safe while living off campus. Mr. Garcia encouraged questions from the Council. Ms. Gross asked how HOJO promotes their services in order to reach the greatest number of students, and Mr. Elston referred the Council to page 22 of the report, which points out some ways they have been increasing promotion. Mr. Garcia highlighted that many of the students they see are referred to them from other University departments, such as the International Students Office (ISO). Ms. Barrafato brought the CCSL's attention to page 7 of the report, which made a distinction between Career and Placement Services (CAPS) and Counseling and Development (CDEV). She noted that CAPS is in fact part of CDEV, therefore perhaps the statistics on both should be combined in the future. Several members of CCSL expressed their desire to promote HOJO within their departments, and requested documentation that could be displayed and handed out to students to inform them of the services available. Ms. Stanbra congratulated Mr. Elston and Mr. Garcia on their excellent work and very impressive report. Mr. Boisvert inquired if there were any future plans to expand on services provided to graduate students. Mr. Garcia responded that although the CSU is only for undergraduate students, they do help out graduate students and there are conversations happening to expand that. Ms. Gross requested that HOJO send some people to Counseling & Development to train their mentors so that they can promote HOJO to students with more knowledge. Mr. Elston added that this could be added to the general procedures of the HOJO Coordinator. Dr. Bolton agreed that the report was very impressive and asked if HOJO was represented at the open house on both campuses, since it would be very important to reach students at Loyola as well. Mr. Elston responded that they were only downtown, however they would consider changing that in the future. Mr. Côté asked for more detail about emerging needs of students that visit HOJO, particularly those needs that seem to be difficult to satisfy. Mr.

Elston responded that he would love to expand on the details, however time restrictions would not permit him to elaborate. He will have more opportunity to go into the issues more deeply with their annual report at the end of the fiscal year.

The Chair added as a Director's comment that she wished to congratulate Mr. Wells and his associate Mr. Hood on the Concordia Volunteer Abroad Program (CVAP) exhibit in the Webster library atrium and encouraged Council members to go view it.

6. STUDENT SERVICES BUDGET

Mr. Côté circulated the following spreadsheets to members of the Council: Student Services Budget Proposal 2009-2012 Version 1 (SSV1), Student Services Budget Proposal Version 2 (SSV2), Recreation & Athletics Budget Proposal Version 1 (R&AV1), Recreation & Athletics Budget Proposal Version 2 (R&AV2). Mr. Côté reminded the Council that SSV1 and R&AV1 had been presented at the January 9th CCSL meeting, which resulted in two working sessions to look in more detail at the proposed operating budgets. Out of the working sessions came suggestions for an updated proposal, resulting in SSV2 and R&AV2. In summary, SSV1 called for an increase in the Student Services per credit fee of \$0.10, \$0.15 and \$0.15 in years 1, 2 and 3 respectively. These increases were based on certain assumptions. Suggestions were made for the CCSL to consider different assumptions when preparing an updated budget proposal. The revised assumptions in V2 were: revised Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) of 24,700; adjusted Continuing Education grant; use of full 2007-2008 surplus (\$609,902). Prior to the DNE deadline (i.e. the last day to officially withdraw from a class with a full refund) of January 19th, the forecasted FTE was 24,600. As of January 28th, the current FTE was 24,700. Mr. Côté warned that there was still some volatility on the number of FTEs due to retroactive changes to registration. An additional 100 FTEs have been forecasted into the next three-year budget. The next revised assumption was that the Continuing Education grant had been a flat \$85,000 per year in SSV1. Since Continuing Education students do not register for credit courses, they are not subject to the Student Services fee. The new assumption would translate the registration activity of Continuing Education students, converting it into credits and therefore FTEs. The resulting value would then be multiplied by the Student Services per credit fee. A flat grant of \$85,000 per year would have assumed a decrease in Continuing Education enrollment and since this is not the prediction, the new assumption and adjusted grant was adopted. The third assumption was the use of the 2007-2008 surplus of the Student Services operating budget. The new assumption would use the entire 2007-2008 surplus of \$609,902 instead of the V1 amount of \$553,000. This would contribute to increasing revenue and therefore decreasing the dependency on the Student Services fee. The resulting proposed Student Services per credit fee increase found in SSV2 was \$0.08 in year 1, \$0.08 in year 2 and \$0.09 in year 3. The new proposal attempts to equalize the fee changes for students from year to year. Mr. Côté reminded CCSL members that this was a proposal for discussion, and that approval was not necessarily being sought at this meeting. He noted that any budget submitted to the Board of Governors would have to be balanced, since the Board only approves balanced budgets.

Ms. Sheahan recalled from the January 9th CCSL meeting that there was concern about the overlapping timelines of the proposal for the Recreation & Athletics 2009-2012 operating budget and the capital campaign fundraising for the expansion of athletic and recreational facilities at the Loyola campus. Ms. Sheahan reiterated that it was coincidental that both issues were being discussed at the same time. She emphasized the importance of the capital campaign in creating lasting assets for the University. Ms. Sheahan said that she would not want the capital campaign discussion to be put at risk in the confusion around operating needs for the day to day running of the Recreation & Athletics sector. Ms. Sheahan explained that it was not until about January 22nd that they had an updated FTE count. After incorporating the new data, it is being recommended that the Recreation & Athletics budget move forward with no increase in fees. Ms. Sheahan highlighted the crucial feature of the Recreation & Athletics department, one that separates it from most other departments, is its capacity to earn additional revenues. The Recreation & Athletics sector must also face salary commitments and rising costs of operation, however they are more able to absorb these increases through income generation. Ms. Sheahan pointed out that approximately \$1.3 million of the \$1.85 million earned in departmental revenues comes from participant fees. Other sources include rental of facilities to external groups, the canteen, sponsorship (in cash) & merchandise, ticket sales and guarantees. She noted that there is also a large value of sponsorship in kind, not reflected in this data.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion.

Dr. Boisvert asked for confirmation that this budget was presented for discussion, not necessarily for approval, and further if it was a fair reflection of some kind of a consensus reached from the budget working sessions. Mr. Côté responded that he could not speak for all who attended the working sessions, but that there was a productive exchange of facts, a gain of greater understanding from the sessions. Ms. Kashfi added that the new budget

proposal reflected a change in the right direction, however there was still an increase in the Student Services fee. Mr. Chivi said that as student representatives they would like to analyze the new proposal further before the February 13th CCSL meeting. He recognized the change from V1 to V2, however there were still details that they would like to examine with their constituencies. Mr. Côté reminded the Council of the timeline for the budget, and that the objective was to adopt a budget by around the 15th of February. Mr. Chivi encouraged other members of CCSL to give their input on the budget. Mr. Savard asked if an agreement had been settled with Continuing Education concerning the change to the grant. Mr. Côté explained that in SSV1 the fee increase had not been applied to Continuing Education, and that was adjusted for SSV2. Continuing Education students would not pay more in fees than an undergraduate student; their non-credit courses would be given the same value as credit courses, resulting in a fee equal to that of an undergraduate student. Mr. Côté highlighted the strong relationship that the Services sector has with Continuing Education, and that dialogue would continue with them throughout the entire process. Ms. Ghadban told the committee that as a Student Services staff representative, she has been involved in the budget process and has attended the working sessions. She felt that the budgets were fair, and acknowledged that the Student Services Directors had worked very hard to develop the budget. Ms. Ghadban added that most of the increase in budgets was from unavoidable staff and collective agreement commitments. Mr. Wells noted the improvement in the proposed budget and asked whether or not there were any projections being made for the years to come after this next budget period. Mr. Côté replied that the forecast of FTEs is what drives the operating budget of the entire University. He acknowledged that although predictions can be made on past trends, these are still just predictions and we cannot be certain of future enrollment. He proposed taking a prudent approach in the predictions, and if a surplus in the budget is obtained, then the CCSL can re-examine on a yearly basis what they would like to do with the extra funds available. Dr. Bolton encouraged the forecast to remain conservative, especially in light of the current economic situation. Dr. Boisvert added that he was impressed with what the Directors of the Student Services sector have proposed and believed that the students would understand the modest increase in fees. He asked if the Directors could foresee further cuts in the budget. Mr. Côté answered that the CCSL would have to consider the implications of further cuts on the quality of services offered to students. Ms. Drew commented that the Health Services department, which already operates on a very lean budget, would be forced to decrease services offered in response to no increase at all. Ms. Gomes asked if it was possible to review the FTE trends of past years in order to apply even a slight increase in FTEs to the forecast for the next three years, therefore further reducing the burden to students. She noted the impact of the adjustment for the 100 FTE increase on the fee to students. Mr. Côté said that he could certainly produce past trend lines, however the impact on the fee was also due to the use of the entire 2007-2008 surplus. Ms. Gomes asked if the definition of an FTE could be reduced to fewer credits considering many students do not take a 30 credit course load. Mr. Côté said that this is decided by the Ministry of Education, not the University. Ms. Kashfi expressed her respect for the work of the Directors, however noted that the Student Services fee is not the only fee increase that students are faced with. She suggested moving into more open discussion on what specific cuts they would like to see in terms of consolidating services, a topic that had previously been discussed. Mr. Côté said that he felt the current budget proposal represented a fair increase without having to compromise on the services offered to students. If further decreases were requested, then the Directors could shed light on the implications of such decisions. Mr. Côté requested that the students acknowledge any threshold beyond which they would not accept an increase. He added that there is always the possibility for further cuts, however the consequences of this must be seriously considered. Mr. Reckziegel pointed out that the increase in year two of the budget proposal was greater than the decrease in year one and Mr. Côté answered that this may be due to the fact that some service contracts may be up for renewal, and therefore must be paid, in year two of the next budget cycle. Ms. Kashfi said that they wished to examine what they could do to ease the burden on students. She noted that the Concordia Student Union (CSU) is equipped to offer services, such as the legal information clinic, in order to reduce the fees to students. She suggested that it would be helpful to at least consider this option. Mr. Côté answered that the CCSL could certainly review the implications of this, how it would affect students and how it would be accommodated. Mr. Côté suggested that this could be examined further at upcoming working sessions. Dr. Boisvert questioned whether or not members of CCSL had given the currently proposed budget a fair chance, and said that the Council should not be so quick to dismiss it without further consideration. Mr. Côté replied that no decisions would be made in the working sessions, but that they would provide opportunity to discuss all options and implications. Mr. Chivi added that the CSU has examined the current budget proposal extensively and would like to consider all options before making any decisions.

Mr. Chivi put forth the following motion, seconded by Ms. Kashfi:

To research the financial and service implications of consolidating services by presenting statistics of the Student Advocate Program and Legal Information Services, and the Concordia Student Union's Legal Information Center and Advocacy Center.

The motion passed unanimously.

Members of the Council clarified that this was not a motion to consolidate services, but rather to put forth research on what the implications would be. Mr. Côté wished to make it clear that it was understood in the motion that information would be gathered and presented in the working session by both the Student Services and the Concordia Student Union. Data would simply be analyzed, and any findings would be brought back to the members of CCSL for further discussion.

Mr. Savard raised the concern that graduate students are currently not covered by the services offered by the CSU, and Ms. Kashfi responded that the CSU would certainly be open for discussion on what adjustments would have to be made to coordinate with the GSA.

7. NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Gomes asked if it would be possible to have research done on the number of water fountains available to students per floor in the University, in light of the desire of many to eliminate water bottle usage. She also noted the importance of clear signage to make the water fountains more visible to students. The Chair said that the proposal had been raised last year, and that a follow up with Facilities Management would likely be the best place to start. Mr. Savard congratulated Mr. Beasley for the implementation of double-sided copying in the library, however noticed that not all machines had been defaulted to that setting, specifically on the fourth floor of the Webster library. Mr. Beasley responded that he is only aware of the color copier not having the double-sided default due to particular problems. He suggested it was possible that the previous user on the machine had reset the default to one-sided copying, but ensured the Council that he would look into the matter.

Mr. Chivi informed the Council that Director Spike Lee would be speaking at the University in the afternoon of February 18th as part of the CSU Speaker Series and invited all members of CCSL to attend. A formal invitation would be extended.

Mr. Chivi brought up the issue of having student art in the stairwells of the University. He mentioned that it was an unresolved issue, perhaps to be brought up with Facilities Management. Mr. Wells added that the topic continued to be raised at FASA executive meetings and inquired how to proceed. The Chair will call a meeting between FASA and Facilities Management to move forward on the issue.

8. NEXT MEETING

An additional formal CCSL meeting has been called for February 2009. CCSL members have been asked to send their availabilities to Ms. Broad as soon as possible. The two proposed meeting times are:

February 13th, 11:45am-1:45pm or February 17th, 10am-12pm. Ms. Broad will follow up with Council members to confirm the date, time and location of the additional meeting. A working session would be coordinated prior to the next CCSL meeting in order to present data on the motion passed.

9. SPECIAL MEETING

Ms. Morey encouraged the members of CCSL and executives of the student umbrella associations to attend the Open Forum: Presidential Panel on the Student Experience, taking place February 13, 10am in H-760.

10. TERMINATION OF MEETING

Mr. Chivi motioned to terminate the meeting. Ms. Sheahan seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.